



PRESS RELEASE

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By Master Sgt. Cornelius Mingo, 168th Wing Public Affairs

168th Air Refueling Wing Guardsmen deploy to Al Udeid

EIELSON AIR FORCE BASE, Alaska — Nearly 30 members of the Alaska Air National Guard's 168th Air Refueling Wing recently deployed to Qatar in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The Guard members deployed Jan. 31 with two of the wing's signature KC-135 Stratotankers, aircraft equipped to perform aerial refueling. The flight crew and maintenance members are well equipped, trained and prepared to conduct numerous inflight refueling missions throughout the duration of the deployment. All members will be stationed at Al Udeid Air Base in support of the mission.

More Guard members are set to join the deployment as well, with waves of Airmen leaving every month or so until April. Eventually, 90 Alaska Air National Guardsmen will be in theater to support the mission. Some will be gone for 60 days, while others will stay for four months, returning home to Eielson Air Force Base in June.

"It has really been a joy for me to be able to do my job as the wing deployment manager and see the success of getting our members out the door knowing that they're ready to go without a doubt," said Master Sgt. James Tritle, 168th Air Refueling Wing deployment manager. "I will also have 100-percent communication with the team during the deployment to cover any needs that might arise."

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Photo Outline:

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Alaska Air National Guard members of the 168th Maintenance Squadron, 168th Air Refueling Wing, board a KC-135 at Eielson Air Force Base Jan. 31 that will take them to Qatar for a deployment performing aerial refueling in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (U.S. Air Force photo taken by Senior Airman Peter Reft)